

REMARKS

INTRODUCTION:

In accordance with the following, no claims have been amended, cancelled or added. Claims 1, 3-7, 9, 11-15, 21-23, 25, 26, 28, 29, 31, 33, 35 and 36 are pending in the present application. Claims 1, 9, 14, 15, 21, 35 and 36 are independent claims.

Reconsideration of the claims is respectfully requested.

ALLOWABLE SUBJECT MATTER:

Claims 14 is indicated as allowed.

REJECTIONS UNDER 35 USC 102 & 103:

Claims 1, 3-5, 15, 21-13, 25, 26, 28, 29 and 36 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,382,621 to Inoue et al. (Inoue) Claims 6 and 7 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Inoue as applied to claim 1, and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,443,251 to Kan et al. (Kan). Claims 9 and 13 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Inoue in view of Kan, and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,217,017 to Yamazaki (Yamazaki). Claim 11 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Inoue in view of Kan and Yamazaki, and further in view of Furuki et al. (Furuki). Claim 12 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Inoue in view of Kan and Yamazaki, and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,485,991 to Hirano et al. (Hirano). Claims 31 and 33 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Inoue and further in view of Kan. Claim 35 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Inoue in view of Yamazaki. All rejections are respectfully traversed.

Independent claim 1 recites at least the following:

“...the stripper comprises an opening groove formed on an upper portion of the stripper such that the contact surface of the lever contacts the side of the paper through the opening groove.”

Inoue Kan Yamazaki Furuki and Hirano, taken separately or in combination, fail to suggest or disclose at least the above-recited features of independent claim 1.

The Office Action asserts at page 2, that item 41 of Inoue describes and illustrates a stripper. The Office Action further asserts Inoue illustrates the above-identified features in Fig.

2. Specifically, the Office Action states:

“...the stripper (41) comprises an opening groove formed on an upper portion of the stripper (41) such that the contact surface of the lever (8) contacts the side of the paper through the opening groove. See e.g., column 10, lines 43-48. Fig. 2 shows that the guides 11 have openings and column 10 lines 43-48 explain that the stripper (41) is fastened to guides 11. Thus, the stripper 41 is located wherever guides 11 are located including the portions of the guides 11 around the openings in Fig. 2. Thus, all of the limitations of claim 1 are met by Inoue et al.”

Applicants disagree with the conclusion reached by the Office Action for at least the following reasons. Referring to FIGS. 11-13 of Inoue, item 41 appears in each of the three figures and fails to illustrate “an opening groove formed on an upper portion of the stripper” in any of the three figures, including the close-up view afforded by FIG. 13. Moreover, the text of Inoue merely refers to item 41 as “a multifold feeding preventing member having a high slide resistance, and which is fastened to the forward end guide surface.” Accordingly, Inoue does not illustrate or describe all of the above-recited claim features.

In the cited text, the Office Action appears to base the rejection on the assertion that “Fig. 2 shows that the guides 11 have openings.” However, even assuming for the sake of argument that guides 11 have openings, the Office Action fails to indicate how this relates to a multifold feeding preventing member 41. In other words, openings in guides 11 do not equate to an opening groove formed on an upper portion of the multifold feeding preventing member 41. In fact, Inoue fails to describe the multifold feeding preventing member 41 as including such features.

Independent claim 1 further recites at least the following:

“a lever shaft installed on the frame, the lever being connected to the lever shaft,

a shaking plate extending from the lever shaft,”

The Office Action asserts at page 2 that the item 9 of Inoue corresponds to the above-recited lever shaft and that item 8a of Inoue corresponds to the above-recited shaking plate. Applicant respectfully disagrees.

Item 8A of Inoue is clearly illustrated and described as "a protrusion of the movable separation slope surface 8" (FIG. 1 and col. 5, lines 18-20). The Office fails to articulate how a protrusion describes the above-recited shaking plate. Moreover, the Office Action fails to show how the protrusion 8a, rather than the separation slope surface 8, extends from item 9 of Inoue.

Kan Yamazaki Furuki and Hirano, alone or in combination, fail to make up for the noted deficiencies of Inoue.

Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit that claim 1 patentably distinguishes over Inoue Kan Yamazaki Furuki and Hirano, and should be allowable for at least the above-mentioned reasons. Since similar features recited by each of the independent claims 9, 15, 21, 35 and 36 and 16, with potentially differing scope and breadth, are not suggested or disclosed by Inoue Kan Yamazaki Furuki and Hirano, the rejection should be withdrawn and claims 9, 15, 21, 35 and 36 also allowed.

Further, claims 3-7, 10, 11-13, 22, 23, 25, 26, 28, 29, 31, 33 and 37, variously depend from independent claims 1, 9, 15, 21, 35 and 36, and should be allowable for at least the same reasons as claims 1, 9, 15, 21, 35 and 36, as well as for the additional features recited therein.

REQUEST FOR INTERVIEW BEFORE NEXT OFFICE ACTION:

Applicant respectfully requests the Examiner contact the undersigned attorney to discuss the pending claims before issuance of the next Office Action. Applicants believe that a more thorough review of the pending claims will be helpful to further prosecution.

CONCLUSION:

There being no further outstanding objections or rejections, it is submitted that the application is in condition for allowance. An early action to that effect is courteously solicited.

Finally, if there are any formal matters remaining after this response, the Examiner is requested to telephone the undersigned to attend to these matters.

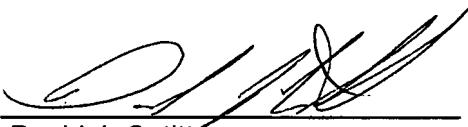
If there are any additional fees associated with filing of this Amendment, please charge the same to our Deposit Account No. 19-3935.

Respectfully submitted,

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